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EDI User Tips

This document was created to help our EDI users and is a work in progress. This document will be expanded as necessary. This is not intended to replace a user's responsibility of reading the specification documents which accompanies an EDI template. If you have any questions or concerns the Campaign and Political Finance Team may be reached by e-mail at cpfhelp@sos.state.co.us or by telephone to 303-894-2200 extension 6383.

For all EDI Users:

- Download and/or print a copy of the specification document associated with the EDI import method you are using. The specification document provides detailed information about the EDI format you are using, including but not limited to:
    - Required elements, worksheets, columns, cells, etc.
    - Character length allowed for elements, worksheets, columns, cells, etc.
    - Code tables for element, worksheets, columns, cells which require the use of a specific code number.

- If required elements/sub-elements, worksheets, columns are missing or left blank (if they are required to have information) the format of the file is deemed incomplete and will not be imported or uploaded and you will receive an error message.

- TRACER will display a message if the import/upload was successful or failed.

- If the import/upload attempt failed, the user will need to correct the format of the file and/or ensure that required elements are populated and then attempt the import/upload again.

- If the import/upload attempt was successful, the user will receive an e-mail (to the e-mail address they input on the import page) detailing any errors and/or warnings related to data contained in the submitted file. The e-mail will detail the number of transactions submitted for processing and the number of transactions actually posted to TRACER for filing.
    - Transactions submitted for importing may encounter errors or warnings. Those encountering errors are not imported while those containing warnings are. If no action is taken to correct these errors and/or warnings, filed reports may not contain expected transactions or will trigger audit letters for incomplete or missing information.
    - After making corrections, the user should reverse the original imported file and resubmit a new file which contains the corrected or missing information and then if ready, the user may file a disclosure report.

    - If the original imported file is not reversed and is used in subsequent import attempts, transactions which were previously imported will be indentified as duplicate and will be skipped. Only transactions which were identified as encountering errors and not previously imported will be imported.
    - A user may decide that they do not want to reverse an imported file to update a transaction which contained a warning, such as a contributor exceeding contribution limits, and would like to update it manually. This is acceptable and may be done by searching for the transaction in the TRACER system, making the necessary change and saving the transaction.

- Users importing files must wait until the imported files have finished processing before filing a report; otherwise, the user will receive an error message. A user may check the status of their imported file using the *Import File History* link on the *Administration* tab. The *Import File History* page also includes a *View* link where the user may see what errors or warnings were associated with a specific import file (this is the same information which was sent to the user via e-mail).

- Importing/uploading transactions into TRACER does not constitute the filing of a disclosure report. Once transactions are imported and the user has reviewed the e-mail regarding the imported/uploaded transaction(s) and has made any necessary adjustments, the candidate or registered agent of the committee must go to the "Filings" tab and select the desired disclosure report and file the report. TRACER will ask the user if they really want to file the report and in order for the filing to be complete the user will need to choose "Ok".

- With very few exceptions, the contributor type of "Candidate" should be only be used when a candidate is making contribution(s) to their own candidate committee. Using "individual" for a candidate's contribution to their own candidate committee may trigger audit warnings for those committees which have contribution limits. If the candidate is making personal contribution(s) to another type of committee/party then they should be categorized as an "individual" contributor. (Remember candidate committees may not contribute to other candidate committees.)

- TRACER treats "candidates" as an "Organization"; therefore, when a user enters a contribution from a candidate to their own committee the user will need to input the candidate's assigned SOS identification number (which is different than their candidate committee' identification number) under the cbOrgId element (column if using excel spreadsheet) and list the candidate's first and last name in the cbOrgName element/column (the candidate's name would not be listed in the cbFirstName, cbMiddleName, cbLastName elements (columns if using excel spreadsheet).

- When making an expenditure to a candidate committee, use the code associated with Candidate Committee in the exPayeeType element/field. Input the committee's assigned Secretary of State (SOS) identification number in the exOrgId element/field. Make sure you are using the committee ID number and **not** the candidate ID number, these are two different numbers and using the wrong number will flag the entry as an error and prevent it from being imported/uploaded.

- When a user selects a Colorado recognized political committee or organization as a contributor, that organization's assigned SOS identification number must appear in the cbOrgId element/column. If the committee or organization is not registered within the TRACER system, then the contributor type of "Other" should be used. (For registration requirements please review 1-45-108 C.R.S.)
  - Recognized political committees or organizations are:
    - Candidate Committee
    - Political Party
    - Political Committee
    - Small Donor Committee
    - Issue Committee
    - 527 Political Organizations
    - Federal PAC's

- The use of the ampersand symbol (&) will cause errors; therefore, you will need to spell out the word "and".

- When using the cbContributionType of "Monetary Non-Itemized" you have to use the cbReceiptType of "Other". The reason "Other" is the appropriate receipt type is because Monetary Non-Itemized contributions can be "lumped" together for disclosure purposes and may be from multiple receipt types.

- Each type of transaction must have a unique identification number and must not be used for any future transaction. For example if a contribution is assigned a contributionId number of 1001 and you attempt to use this same number on a future transaction the future transaction will not be imported/uploaded because it will be flagged as a duplicate entry. This is the same for the following elements and/or categories: expenditureId, loanId, contributionReturnId, expenditureReturnId, and loanPaymentId.

- Contributors and Payees are stored as contacts in TRACER, similar to how you might have an e-mail distribution list. TRACER does not separate the contacts into a "contributors" and "payees" list but combines them into one. If a contact is a contributor (including LLC members) or payee (including a loan source) then the external reference ID used for that contact would be the same. Example: If John Doe makes a contribution to your committee as an individual and then another contribution as a member of an LLC and you then make an expenditure to John for a service he is providing, the external reference ID in the cbContributorId, cmMemberContributorId and exPayeeId elements/fields would be the same external reference ID number. You do not need to change a contact's external reference ID. Changing the ID number would create a "new" or duplicated contact record.

- The cbContributorId, cmMemberContributorId and exPayeeId are optional; however, not using them may create duplicate contact records for contributors and payees.

XML Users:

- Occupation and employer elements are required for contributions from individuals (natural persons) of $100 or more. If these elements are not included, the format is considered incomplete and will not import/upload.

- For contributions where Occupation and Employer elements are not required, you may use these elements but you have to use both. If you add Occupation without Employer or vise versa, the format will be considered incomplete and will not import/upload.

Excel Spreadsheet Users:

We strongly encourage users to refrain from making any modifications or alterations to the Excel template that is available on our website as changes may complicate or prohibit the successful upload of data contained in the spreadsheet. This includes modifying the underlying cell formats and any associated formulas that may be embedded in the spreadsheet or inserting additional formulas. If changes are made, this may limit our ability to assist you with any errors or questions you may have regarding the import/upload template and or process.

- The spreadsheet template has the required worksheets; adding additional worksheets will change the format and will prevent it from being imported/uploaded.

- **Control Worksheet**
  - All fields are required to have information otherwise the format will be considered incomplete and will not import/upload.

- **Contribution Worksheet**
  - The most commonly overlooked columns are: cbContributorType, cbOrgId and cbElectioneering.

- **cmContributionMember Worksheet**
  - **This worksheet was added to the template on May 19, 2010, and is used to list LLC member information for LLC contributions listed on the Contribution worksheet.**

- **Expenditure Worksheet**
  - The most commonly overlooked columns are: exOrgId, exElectioneering, exIndependent, and exExplanation.

- **exCandidateWorksheet**
  - Most commonly overlooked column is exSuppOpp